

[9 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

**Release of funds for KBK districts in Orissa**

1984. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have accepted the revised long term action plan submitted by the Government of Orissa for the overall development of KBK districts of Orissa; and

(b) if so, how much funds have been released by the Central Government for KBK districts during the years 1998-99, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) In addition to the normal flow of funds under Central Plan and Centrally Sponsored Schemes, the funds, as given below, have been released during 1998-99 and 1999-2000 for implementation of the Long Term Action Plan (LTAP) for KBK districts:

Year	Amount (Rs. in crore)
1998-99	46.00
1999-2000	57.60

The Annual Plan 2000-2001 for the State of Orissa has not yet been finalised.

**Panchayat elections in Bihar**

1985. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for more than 22 years there has been no Gram Panchayat election in Bihar;

(b) what steps Government have taken to impress upon the Bihar Government to hold election to Panchayats;

c) whether Government are contemplating any steps to make development and poverty eradication grants, conditional upon holding of regular Panchayat elections and their functioning; and

(d) what other steps Government propose to ensure that Panchayat elections a constitutional obligation, are indeed held in Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI SUNDAR LAL PATWA): (a) to (d) While the holding of Panchayat Elections is primarily the responsibility of the State authorities, the Central Government have taken up this matter, from time to time, with the Government of Bihar who expressed inability to hold the same as the Hon'ble High Court at Patna had, in March, 1996, struck down certain provisions of the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act. The State Government had filed Special Leave Petitions (SLPs) in the Hon'ble Supreme Court. Subsequently, the Hon'ble High Court at Patna, directed the State Government to hold Panchayat Elections; the State Government filed a petition in the Hon'ble Supreme Court for stay of the orders passed by the Hon'ble High Court at Patna in March, 1996.

The Tenth Finance Commission awarded a grant of Rs. 507.19 crores for devolution to the PRIs in Bihar for the period 1996—2000; out of this amount, a sum of Rs. 126.80 crores was released to Bihar. Further instalments were not released as Panchayats were not in position in the State. It has also been decided that while 80% of funds (under the Employment Assurance Scheme) would be released as per normal procedure, the remaining 20% would be released as an incentive only to States which have put in place Elected and Empowered Panchayati Raj Institutions.

While, as per the constitutional provisions, it is incumbent upon the State Government to hold Panchayat Elections, efforts are also being made at the Central level to seek early hearing of the matter in the Hon'ble Supreme Court.